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ART. X. — *La Rigenerazione ; Giornale Storico Politico della Sicilia*, diretto dal Signor LUIGI TIRRITO. Anno primo della Rigenerazione. Palermo. 1848.

IN our last number, we gave a brief account of the Conquest of Sicily by the Normans, and presented a sketch of what may be deemed the brightest period in the history of that island. Since then, the periodical, the title of which is quoted above, has come to our notice, and from the materials that it furnishes we can frame an imperfect narrative of the struggle for independence, which commenced in that land in 1848, before France had broken down the barriers which hemmed in the mighty flood of Revolution, and which she is now as intent on rebuilding as she was then eager to destroy. To render this account more intelligible, we must first cast a glance at the former history of the island, in order to show the nature of its connection with Naples.

It is well known that when the family of Hohenstauffen succeeded the Norman princes in Southern Italy, both Naples and Sicily were united under one government. This continued to be the case during the administration of the princes of the House of Anjou, until 1282, when, in consequence of the Sicilian Vespers, the French were driven from Sicily, and the island passed under the dominion of the House of Aragon. The kingdoms continued to be separated until Alphonso V. conquered Naples, and once more united the two provinces under a common sway. When the house of Aragon became extinct, both kingdoms were subjected to Spain, by whose monarchs they were governed until the death of Charles II., (the last male heir of the Spanish branch of the house of Austria); when Philip having succeeded to the throne of Spain, the Two Sicilies passed to the house of Austria. This arrangement was not destined to last long. Elizabeth Farnese, the second wife of Philip V., had succeeded in procuring for her son the Duchies of Parma and Tuscany. But a ducal coronet alone could not satisfy her insatiable ambition, and she determined to use every means in her power to obtain for him the crown of the Two Sicilies. Charles was enjoying the pleasures of youth at his ducal residence at Parma, when he received letters from his mother, apprizing him of the plans

which had been formed for his future greatness. Spain, France, and Lombardy were then in league against the empire ; a mighty French army, led by Berwick, had passed the Rhine ; another, under the command of Villars, had descended into Lombardy. The object of this undertaking was to overthrow the imperialists beyond the Rhine, to drive them from Lombardy, and to conquer the Two Sicilies, " which," wrote Elizabeth to her son, " will be yours, as soon as they are rescued from their present possessors. Go, then, and conquer ! The most splendid crown in Italy awaits you." Charles, naturally ambitious, and sharing in some degree the warlike spirit of his ancestors, was easily persuaded to obey this summons, especially as he believed he had some right to the Two Sicilies, in consideration of the ancient dominion which the kings of Spain had exercised over them.

The expedition against Naples was successful, and Charles, after he had entered the capital, and subdued the different fortresses of the kingdom, determined to make an attack on Sicily. The people of that island desired him to be their monarch, perhaps as much from the love of change, as from the natural enmity of all Italians for the Germans. The Spanish fleet left Naples on the 23d of August, 1734 ; and no sooner had it appeared before Palermo, than the Viceroy fled to Malta, and the city surrendered. Messina did the same, and the whole island soon followed the example thus given. The treaty concluded at Vienna, in 1739, confirmed Charles in his new conquests, and thus the Two Sicilies were again united into one kingdom.

The first object of the young king was to reform the legislation of the country, which, under the dominion of the house of Austria, had been much neglected. But he had neither courage nor foresight enough to strike a decisive blow at all the abuses which had been accumulating for centuries in the State ; and although he certainly did effect some salutary reforms, he did much less than a prince of a more energetic and independent nature might have accomplished. The feudal pretensions of the aristocracy, the exorbitant claims of the clergy, the municipal privileges of the cities, were obstacles to reform, which more firmness and wisdom might have overcome, but which Charles had not the face to surmount. On the whole, however, when we consider the misrule to which

the Two Sicilies had been so long accustomed, the reign of Charles was rather favorable to his people. In 1759, this monarch was called to the throne of Spain; and as it had been stipulated in the treaty of Vienna that the Two Sicilies should never again be united to the Spanish monarchy, he conferred the former kingdom on his son, who commenced his reign under the name of Ferdinand IV.

The first part of his reign offers no event of importance; but Ferdinand's administration, during the latter part of the last century was marked by the most despotic and inquisitorial policy. The assassination of Gustavus of Sweden, the outbreak of the Revolution in France, the death of Louis XVI., and the Reign of Terror in Paris, were events well calculated to fill with apprehension a government which had rested rather on physical force than on the love of its subjects. The vigilance of the police daily increased, innumerable arrests on the slightest suspicion took place, and the whole kingdom was in a state of constant agitation. Such was its condition when Bonaparte, at the head of a republican army, entered Italy, drove the Austrians out of Lombardy, and agitated every part of the peninsula with fear of change. Alarmed at the progress of the French, the king of Naples declared war against them, though with little prospect of waging it with success. The invading army took Gaeta, Pescara, and Civitella, and on the 21st of December, 1798, the royal family were obliged to leave Naples, carrying with them the crown jewels and treasures of the State, and leaving the unhappy country involved in domestic and foreign war. On the 23d of January, the French entered Naples, promising the people a better government, and that neither persons nor property should be molested. Naples was declared to be an independent Republic, and was to be administered by an assembly of citizens.

The French did not long occupy the city, however, and on their evacuating the territory in 1799, Ferdinand IV. was recalled to the throne. Exile had not taught him wisdom, and his restoration to power was the beginning of a new career of cruelty and oppression. In 1806, on the approach of Joseph Bonaparte and Massena at the head of a powerful army, he was again obliged to abandon his capital, and under the protection of the English, he sailed for Sicily. Joseph

entered Naples, and was shortly after proclaimed king of the Two Sicilies ; but two years afterwards, he was called to the vacant throne of Spain, and Joachim Murat became king of Naples. Meanwhile, Sicily remained under the control of the Bourbons ; and Queen Caroline, taking advantage of the condition of the king, who was incapable of attending to business, assumed the reins of government. Weary of the authority which the English were arrogating to themselves in Sicily, she determined to rid herself of them, and if all hope of reconquering Naples was gone, to reign at least unmolested in the island. For this purpose, she concluded a treaty with Napoleon, by which it was agreed that the ports of Sicily should be opened to the French, on condition that they should drive the English away. Whilst these negotiations were pending, Murat made an unsuccessful attempt to get possession of the island. The negotiations between Caroline and Napoleon could not be so secretly carried on as not to become known to the English, who immediately began to counteract the political measures of the queen.

The island was in a distracted condition, and the English determined to attempt to remedy the existing state of things by constitutional means, before resorting to open force. For this purpose, they induced the government to convene a parliament ; and this assembly, which was destined to produce radical changes in the organization of the State, met in 1810. By it the lands held by feudal tenure were made allodial, and many baronies were abolished. To this measure, the barons, who seem to have showed a most disinterested and patriotic spirit, made no objection, although the reform could not but injure their revenues and lessen their influence. The parliament also decreed, that a general assessment of the land should be made, in order that the land-tax might be more equitably distributed ; and great improvements were effected in the judiciary. In these reforms, the nobility had taken a large share ; and the queen, finding that her power was on the wane, resolved to act vigorously in support of the royal authority. She caused five of the principal noblemen in the island to be arrested. This imprudent course defeated the object which she had in view ; for the English, finding that they could no longer depend upon her, especially since the marriage of Maria Louisa had created a bond of union between

Napoleon and the queen, resolved to unite with the barons. For this purpose, Lord Bentinck was sent as minister to Palermo. The first thing he did was to demand the liberation of the barons who had been imprisoned. The queen haughtily refused, and demanded of Lord Bentinck by what right he obtruded himself into the affairs of the kingdom. Finding that her determination was inflexible, Bentinck left the room, exclaiming, "either a constitution or a revolution." He immediately went to London, and having procured full powers, returned to Naples in less than three months. Now that he was invested with the supreme command of the army, and could support his counsels with an armed force, the queen found resistance useless. She was obliged to retire to a country seat in the neighborhood of Palermo, and the king was forced to abdicate in favor of his son, as vice-general of the kingdom. Bentinck was elected captain-general of Sicily, and consequently the whole command of the nation rested in his hands. These events occurred in 1812.

The parliament was again convoked for the purpose of remedying abuses and remodelling the fundamental laws. A new constitution was formed, and, after some hesitation on the part of the young prince, it was solemnly ratified. By this instrument, the legislative power and the power of levying taxes were vested in the parliament alone; its decrees, when sanctioned by the king, were to have the force of law. The executive power was committed to the king, whose person was to be sacred and inviolable. The judges were entirely independent of both king and parliament; the ministers were responsible for every act, the senate having the right of examining and impeaching them for high treason. The parliament was composed of two chambers; the one for the representatives of the people, the other for the peers. The power of convoking parliament belonged exclusively to the king, who was, however, required to assemble it once in every year. These were the chief features of a constitution, which was soon to be violated by the monarch, though the people justly regarded it as the charter of their liberties.

No sooner, indeed, had the downfall of Napoleon restored Ferdinand once more to the throne of the Two Sicilies, than he abolished this constitution. Such treachery could not have been expected from a king, who, twice an exile from a

portion of his dominions, had been received by the Sicilians with hospitality, and had been enabled by them to support his Neapolitan retainers, his expensive army, and the luxurious court which he had established at Palermo. That the remainder of his reign should have been one continued struggle of the oppressed Sicilians against his despotic sway is no cause for wonder. The discontent which had long been cherished at last broke out in the open rebellion of 1820. This is not the place to give a full account of the celebrated insurrection which then took place. It is well known that the king granted a constitution for Naples, and promised to restore to his Sicilian subjects the constitution of 1812; but the absolute powers of Europe objected to his course; and when he went to the Congress at Laybach, he found that the Emperors of Austria and Russia, as well as the King of Prussia, were determined to declare void all the acts of his government subsequent to the revolutionary movement. Instead of maintaining his right to regulate the affairs of his own kingdom as he chose, Ferdinand acquiesced in the proposition of the Northern powers to send an army into Italy to restore him to absolute power. He was thus enabled to return to Naples once more as its absolute sovereign, but branded with infamy for his treacherous conduct. Under his successor, Francis, the government was maintained on the same principles.

But it was reserved for the present king, Ferdinand II., to complete the work of despotism, and thus to prepare the way for the events of which we are about to speak. When Ferdinand I. was restored to the throne of the Two Sicilies, in 1815, it was with the understanding that the island of Sicily should be administered as a separate kingdom, possessing independent rights and a separate constitution. Unmindful of this, he had no sooner got possession of the throne again, than he labored to centralize every thing in Naples. He never convened the parliament of Sicily, and although the constitution provided that the taxes should not exceed 1,847,687 *once*. without the consent of this parliament, he established new taxes at his pleasure. His successors followed this course, so that, in 1838, the amount of money received by the government in taxation was 5,800,000 *once*. Had this money been spent in Sicily, the Sicilians would

have had less cause of complaint. But this was not the case. Sicily should have borne about a quarter part of the expenses of the united kingdom, and should have received about a third of the offices ; instead of which, it had to pay about half the annual expenses, and scarcely shared at all in the administration of the state. In the ministry which existed previously to the late insurrection, out of eleven ministers there was only one Sicilian, and he occupied the least important place.

It was the present king who consummated this despotic work in 1837, by taking away the power of the Lieutenant General of Sicily, by abolishing the Ministry of State for Sicilian affairs, by centralizing in Naples the whole administration of the island, and by confiding the most important offices in the island to Neapolitans, thus reducing Sicily to the rank of a province of Naples. By this means, he paralyzed its energies and impoverished its people ; but he also roused the national indignation, and gave rise to the present struggle for independence. Since the revolution of 1821, many petitions, signed by large numbers of Sicilians, had been addressed to the government, imploring it to grant the constitution of 1812 to the island. They had all proved vain, and it was not until such peaceful means of attaining their object had been exhausted, that the Sicilians had recourse to force. On the 12th of January, 1848, the growing discontent broke out in open rebellion.

The beginning of this insurrectionary movement was unquestionably hastened by the effect which the liberal measures of the new papal administration had produced throughout Italy. When Cardinal Mastai Ferreti succeeded Gregory XVI., in the month of June, 1846, it was thought that the new pope, the *buon*, the *gran Pio*, as he was enthusiastically called by the Italians, was about to emancipate Italy from the state of degradation and bondage in which she had been so long held. Doubtful as any one, who is guided in his political speculations by the sober dictates of his understanding rather than by the seductive impulses of his heart, may be as to the future prospects of Italy, he cannot but be interested in the many endeavors which have been made since the downfall of Napoleon, by the people of that once prosperous land, to recover their independence and their former standing among the

nations of the world. The restoration of Italian nationality under one form or another has been the aim of all Italian patriots, since 1814. The Carbonari, a political sect founded in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies during the stormy administration of Queen Caroline, continued for a long time to be the principal secret society of Italy, but was at length superseded by the sect of "Young Italy," at whose head was Mazzini. He was driven from Italy in 1831, in consequence of the share he had taken in the insurrectionary movement which occurred after the French revolution of 1830; and he maintained his influence by his contributions to a journal called *La Giovine Italia*, which he founded at Marseilles. At a later period, he attracted the attention of the whole of Europe, not by any merit of his own, but through the conduct of the English Home Secretary, who, to satisfy the demands of the Austrian government, violated the secrecy of his private correspondence. He has since, by his connection with the late revolutionary government of Rome, become the object of admiration of the radical party in Italy, France, and England, and, we are sorry to say, of many of our own countrymen, who, through a mistaken zeal for republican principles, are too prone to admire every fanatical demagogue who may chance to rise for a few hours on the crest of a revolutionary wave. We cannot see that Americans are any more bound to sympathize with every radical movement in Europe, which dignifies itself with the name of republican, than we should be to lend a favorable ear to the ravings of our own demagogues, — of those, for instance, who recently kindled a civil war in Rhode Island, or of the Anti-rent party who assassinated sheriffs and constables in New York. The sympathies of the true American should be enlisted on the side of liberty and order, and when he becomes convinced that those two blessings can only be attained in Europe, — at least, for the present, — by a constitutional monarchy, his sympathies should be with that form of government.

It was not by Mazzini or his party that Italy could be regenerated. To suppose that the Lombard and the Roman, the Sardinian and the Neapolitan, would unite to form one Italian republic, and that the princes who had so long held these countries under their absolute dominion would either resign their privileges and place themselves at the head of

the movement, or would yield without a long and desperate resistance to the revolutionary torrent, would be to argue little knowledge either of human nature or of history. Societies like the Carbonari, the Patrioti Europei, the Federati, the Filadelfi, the Giovine Italia, or any of the innumerable associations which have arisen in Italy during the present century, can do but little for the regeneration of a country. A despotic government is not overthrown, still less induced to adopt a different political course, by such means. It should be met openly, frankly, and lawfully, and reminded that there is a power greater than any which a despotic ruler can command, — public opinion. Moral force is the only force likely to be of much avail against a government which has under its control large standing armies. This truth began to be understood by a large party of Italians, who abandoned these secret societies, and lent a willing ear to the calmer and more rational views of such men as Gioberti, Balbo, and D’Azeglio. Gioberti, in his able and eloquent work on the supremacy of Italy,* maintained that, in order to establish any thing like political unity in the peninsula, a league of Italian princes, having at their head the Pope, must be formed. Balbo and D’Azeglio preached the renouncement of all violent measures; according to them, the independence of Italy could be attained only by peaceful measures, by patience, moderation, and endurance. Arms are only to be resorted to when all other means have been exhausted, and when the nation is ready for such a struggle. “I hold,” says D’Azeglio, in speaking of the melancholy disturbances which occurred at Rimini in 1845, “I hold this movement a premature and dangerous one, and I shall hold all such partial movements as premature and dangerous. I may say boldly, that I consider them as worthy of blame; because a minority has never the right to judge, whether the time has come or not to plunge the nation to which it belongs into the great struggle for independence; for it has not the right to risk on a mere chance the subsistence, the tranquillity, the liberty, the life of an incalculable number of fellow citizens, and, what is still more important, the honor and future destinies of a whole nation.” †

* *Del Primato Civile e Morale degl' Italiani.* Per V. GIOBERTI. 1843.

† *Degli ultimi Casi di Romagna.* Di MASSIMO D'AZEGLIO. 1846.

Balbo advised his countrymen to wait until some great event in Europe, such as the fall of the Ottoman Empire, should render probable their success in shaking off the yoke of Austrian dominion, the first and necessary step for Italian independence.* In speaking of the different impulses given to public opinion, we should not forget the annual meetings of scientific men in different cities of the peninsula, which were first organized in 1839, and which, by bringing together men from different parts of the country, kept alive a national spirit. Nor should we forget the privilege of copyright, which has been but recently extended to the whole of Italy, and by means of which, the different publications issued in the country were more widely circulated.

When Pius IX. was raised to the papal throne, it seemed as if the golden dream of Gioberti was about to be realized. The first wish of the new Papal Government appeared to be to found an administration more in harmony with the spirit of the age. A general amnesty was granted; hundreds of exiles, who for years had been wandering through Europe or enjoying the hospitality of France and England, were allowed to revisit their native land; many of the severest laws against the press were abrogated; the Code was revised, the administration reorganized and secularized, the magistracy reformed. A new era seemed to be dawning for Italy. The enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds. All eyes were turned towards a pope, who seemed to renounce all the political traditions of the Vatican, and to be ambitious of the novel reputation of a reforming Sovereign Pontiff. From one end of the peninsula to the other, the people were induced to demand of their sovereigns reforms corresponding to those which had been made at Rome. Tuscany soon followed the movement. Charles Albert, to whose memory a tribute is due, in spite of the many blemishes of his character, for the noble manner in which he defended the cause of Italian independence, and then, renouncing his honors and the dream of an ambitious life, went to die in a foreign land broken-hearted and despairing, was soon engaged in the struggle. The other states of Italy were irresistibly hurried on in the same course. Who, on seeing the enthusiasm cre-

* *Delle Speranze d'Italia.* DI CESARE BALBO.

ated by the Pope at that time, could have foreseen the events, which have since occurred at Rome,—the beloved Pius driven from his capital, and forced to seek refuge in the states of that contemptible tyrant, Ferdinand of Naples, that *Borbone, Borbonaccio, Borboncino*, ferocious as Nero, and mad as Caligula, as the Sicilians contemptuously call him? It is a memorable lesson to remind princes and statesmen of the heavy responsibility which is incurred, by attempting the great work of reform, unless certain of being able to stop its career whenever it becomes necessary. It is dangerous to slacken the reins of a fiery steed, unless confident that you have retained the power of checking him at will.

The enthusiasm to which the acts of the new papal government gave rise necessarily spread to the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Neither the despotism of the government, nor the vigilance of its agents, could conceal from the people the hopes which had been awakened in other parts of Italy. No custom-house barriers or military outposts could prevent the magic words of independence and regeneration from reaching the ears of the discontented subjects of Ferdinand of Naples. Like the other nations of Italy, they were too intent on their great aim, the liberty of their country, and too much excited by the enthusiasm of the moment, to stop to consider whether a pope could really be a reformer, in the sense in which that word is at present understood; whether the infallible successor of St. Peter could, by a stroke of his pen, undo the work of his equally infallible predecessors, and remodel the whole constitution of the papal government; whether the temporal power vested in the hands of a sovereign, who in all spiritual matters is absolute, could be other than absolute; whether Catholicism as understood at Rome could be reconciled with a free form of government. These were questions far too serious, and requiring too much reflection for the Italians to have meditated them as they ought, before embarking on the dangerous sea of revolution. The first liberal measures of a pope filled with the best intentions, but unconscious of the incompatibility of his authority with the reforms which the age demanded, were enough to dazzle the imagination of all Italians, and to fill their minds with the golden dream of independence. To give reality to this dream, and so to direct public opinion as both to check the hasty and rash ebullitions

of patriotic feeling so natural amongst a people long restrained, and to rouse from their apathy those whom long years of suffering and passive submission had rendered almost indifferent to the hopes and destiny of their country, was the hard task which the intelligent men of all parts of the peninsula had to perform.

There was no state in Italy in which they had more difficulties to contend with, in attempting to accomplish this work, than the Two Sicilies. The political differences between Naples and Sicily, the municipal rivalry between the principal cities of the island, the indolence and indifference of the Italians, the courage and ardor of the Sicilians, the consequent difficulty of urging the former and restraining the latter, and the want of any understanding as to the course which the people ought to adopt, were obstacles not easily overcome. The leading patriots endeavored, however, to convince the people, that the hatred which had existed between the two parts of the country had been kept alive by the government, which hoped by this means to keep them more surely in bondage; that the Sicilians in fact loved the Neapolitans, although by identifying the people with the government, it often appeared as if they cherished an invincible hatred against them; and that the Neapolitans, who were suffering the same wrongs as the Sicilians, could not be suspected of wishing to subjugate a country which possessed its own institutions and laws. They endeavored also to break down the spirit of rivalry, which had long existed between the principal cities of the island, and to check the ardor and impatience of the inhabitants.

As to the means by which the regeneration of the state might be accomplished, two courses were proposed. The one was preferred by those, who, knowing the character of the Neapolitan government, the obstinacy of the king, and the devotion with which he was served by the army, thought that it was necessary to oppose force to force, and make an appeal to arms. The other was entirely pacific, and was favored by those who thought that there was no force equal to moral force. They proposed that, by means of clandestine printing presses established in the different cities, the enthusiasm of the people should be kept alive and prudently guided; and that the people should refuse to pay the taxes, and endeavor, by associating as much as possible with the army, to gain it

over to the popular cause. The latter proposition was received with the greatest favor, and the nation were preparing to carry it out, when the Calabrians, impatient of restraint and exasperated against the government, broke out in open rebellion. The royal troops, aided by a very effectual police, soon disarmed the insurgents; but the indignation of the whole nation was roused by the cruelty which the government displayed, and the king perceived it would be necessary to adopt some measure to tranquillize the public feeling. One of the ministers, Santangelo, who had rendered himself especially obnoxious to the people, was dismissed; and although the honors with which he was invested in order to console him for his disgrace somewhat weakened the effect, the feelings of the people were somewhat soothed. In the theatres and public places, the cries of "long live the King," "long live Pope Pius," and "long live the Reform," were constantly heard. In Sicily, the enthusiasm at the disgrace of Santangelo was very great, for he had always been regarded as a personal enemy of the people of the island. Any manifestation of this enthusiasm was prohibited. At this time, the direction of the police of Palermo was in the hands of General Vial. By his inquisitorial administration, he had rendered himself the object of universal hatred. Indeed, to judge from his conduct, one would suppose that his sole object was to urge the people to rebellion, in the hope that the nobility and the wealthy inhabitants of the city would join him in putting down any such attempt. It was thus, at least, that the people understood his conduct; for when proclamations were posted up on the walls, inviting them to take up arms, they immediately tore them down, declaring that the police was only urging them to rebellion in order to ruin them. The whole population of the island was indeed united in a determination to obtain from the government a constitution, and only to appeal to arms when all other means should fail. There was no conspiracy formed;

"Un popol non congruira; ognun s'intende
Senza accordo verun";

but the whole nation might be said to have resolved to accomplish this great object. No secret was made of this intention, and great agitation prevailed throughout the country.

The government alone was blind to the growing discontent, and still relied on its military force to prevent any manifestation of opinion in the island. At the beginning of the month of January, a proclamation was issued from Palermo and circulated throughout the island, in which the Sicilians were called upon to take up arms in the following energetic language: —

“Sicilians, the time for prayers is passed; pacific protestations, remonstrances, and petitions, all have remained ineffectual. Ferdinand has treated them all with contempt; and a people who were born free, and are now loaded with chains and reduced to misery, can no longer delay to claim their legitimate rights. To arms, sons of Sicily! Our united force will be invincible. The break of day on the 12th of January shall be the glorious era of our regeneration and independence. Palermo will receive with transport every Sicilian who shall come armed to sustain the common cause, and establish reformed institutions in conformity with the progress of Europe, and the will of Italy and of Pius IX. Union, order, obedience to chiefs, respect to property. Robbery is declared a crime of high treason against the country, and shall be punished as such. Whoever may be in want shall be supplied at the common charge. Heaven will not fail to second our just undertaking. Sicilians, to arms!”

Even this proclamation was unheeded by the government, and the consequence was that, on the day appointed, the long anticipated revolution broke out. The 12th of January had been selected by the people because it was the king's birthday, a day which was generally celebrated by public rejoicings, but which was now to serve as the epoch from which to date a revolution that was to render Ferdinand the object of the contempt and execration, not only of those who had to suffer from his cruelty and tyranny, but of all such as have one spark of generous feeling left. On the morning of that day, Palermo wore a mournful aspect. The streets were deserted, the shops closed, the troops were confined to their barracks, and one might have fancied that some dire calamity had befallen the city. No agitation was visible except in the neighborhood of the royal palace, which was surrounded by troops. In the course of the day, however, animated groups began to form in the streets. Bands of young men with arms in their hands marched through different parts of the city, encouraging the people, and shouting, long live the

Pope! Towards evening, the aspect of affairs became more menacing. The troops were ordered out, barricades were formed, and a conflict commenced between the populace and the soldiers. But either the troops sympathized with the people, or they were unwilling to fight, for they were repelled at almost every point without much bloodshed. During the night, the people seemed to be sole masters of the city, which was illuminated. The next day, however, was to decide the struggle. The troops seemed to have gained courage during the night, and on the morrow a serious battle commenced between the two parties. The people formed a more deliberate plan of attack, and on the 14th, a number of the principal noblemen and citizens of Palermo formed a Committee of Public Defence. This committee was divided into four sections; one for military affairs, of which Prince Pantelleria was the head; another for finances, under the direction of Marquis Budini; a third, under Marshal Settimo, for the publication of all matters of interest to the people; and the fourth for provisioning the city, under the guidance of the Duke of Monteleone. The insurrection was thus organized, and the government, finding no other means of subduing the insurgents, resolved to bombard the city. The bombardment consequently commenced without any notice given to the foreign consuls residing at Palermo. So direct a violation of the law of nations could not pass unnoticed; and on the 19th of January, the foreign consuls met at the house of the French consul, and made a solemn protest against the bombardment. The only effect of this protest was to suspend hostilities for twenty-four hours; and on the 21st, the firing recommenced.

But weary of carrying on hostilities which seemed to be without effect on the exasperated people, the commander of the troops sent to the Committee of Public Defence to ask what were their demands, and on what conditions they would lay down their arms. An endeavor to ascertain this point would have been more reasonable before attacking the city in so barbarous a manner. The reply of the Committee was calm and dignified, and must have proved to the king's brother, the Count of Aquila, who was then with the Neapolitan fleet which was at anchor before Palermo, that the revolution was more serious than the government had apprehended. "The people," they replied, "care little for the

horrors of a bombardment, and will lay down their arms when the whole of Sicily, represented in a general parliament, shall have adapted to the wants of the times that constitution which was solemnly confirmed by its kings, recognized by foreign powers, and which has never been openly taken from the Sicilians." Meanwhile, however, the king, by a decree published on the 18th of January, had granted some concessions to his Sicilian subjects. It was provided that a prince of the royal family should reside in the island as Lieutenant-General; separate administrations were granted to Naples and Sicily, and the powers of the *Consulta di Stato* were increased. These concessions, which in fact merely reëstablished the government on the same footing as in 1816, were not sufficient to satisfy a people who began to be conscious of their strength. The committee refused them, and once more promised to lay down their arms in the hall of the parliament when it should be assembled.

Hostilities were accordingly renewed. The palace of the governor was stormed and taken, and the troops were compelled to abandon the city, and take refuge in the castle, or on board the Neapolitan fleet. The castle became now the principal object of the attack of the insurgents. While they were preparing to march against it, the commander received despatches from his government, announcing that, on the 29th of January, a constitution had been granted for the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. This was on the 3d of February. An officer was immediately sent to the president of the General Committee, to inform him of the gracious act of his sovereign. An immense crowd had assembled to hear the official communication of the government read, and it awaited in breathless anxiety the reply of the General Committee. It was as firm as their former replies had been. The people had taken up arms, they said, in order to regain their former constitution, which in 1812 had been remodelled by their parliament; and they would only suspend hostilities when the parliament should have been assembled in Palermo. This reply was received with unbounded enthusiasm by the people. On the following day, it was resolved to attack the fort of Castellamare. On the 8th of February it surrendered, and the tri-colored flag, inscribed with the magic words, *Confederazione Italiana*, was hoisted on the battlements. Colonel Gross,

who commanded, was permitted to embark with the garrison, thus leaving Palermo entirely in the hands of the insurgents.

Meanwhile, the rest of Sicily had thrown off the yoke of Neapolitan dominion, and the General Committee of Palermo had proclaimed itself a Provisional Government. These auspicious events were celebrated by a solemn *Te Deum*, executed at the cathedral; and on the evening of the 6th, the city was illuminated and the theatres were opened. The writer of *La Riforma* dwells with delight on the enthusiasm displayed on this occasion. The splendid duet of Bellini's *Puritani* was performed amidst the rapturous shouts of the assembly. At the last words, —

“ Bello è affrontar la morte
Gridando liberta ! ”

the people were so transported by the words and the spirited music of their lamented countryman, that they arose and joined in such a chorus as had never before been heard in Palermo. It is difficult for us to conceive of the impression produced by such a scene on an Italian assembly, and there is perhaps some reason to distrust the success in any great undertaking of a people which thus wastes its energies. We should make due allowance, however, for the excitable temperament of a southern race, passionately fond of music, and for whom, owing to the care with which the governments of the different states of the Peninsula guard against the performance of any music which might excite the multitude, the execution of certain pieces has become almost a political event. Yet those who were making so noisy a demonstration, should have been reminded of what M. Michelet once said to a large concourse of young men who had assembled to hear his lecture, and who were applauding him in the most vociferous manner: “ You had better reserve your strength, for you may be called upon to exercise it on some more important occasion than this.”

Meanwhile, Lord Minto, the English Minister, was endeavoring to make peace between the King of Naples and his Sicilian subjects. The constitution granted on the 29th of January had been, as we have seen, rejected by the Sicilians, who still maintained that they would only lay down their arms, when they had obtained a separate parliament. The

government could then only choose between war and this concession. Owing to the intervention of Lord Minto, the latter course was followed. The King sanctioned the plan of convening a Sicilian parliament, and on the 24th of February, the Provisional Government issued a decree convoking the parliament for the 25th of March. Thus all cause of difficulty between the two countries seemed to have vanished. The King of Naples had sanctioned the decree for opening the parliament; he had agreed to adopt the constitution of 1812, with such modifications as the progress of the age might demand; one of his brothers, or one of the principal noblemen of Sicily, was to govern the island as Viceroy; a responsible minister was to reside in Sicily, and money was to be coined in both states.

The fickle monarch, however, fearing that he had gone too far, issued on the 22d of March a document in which he solemnly protested against the proceedings of the Provisional Government of Sicily. They tended, he said, to the dismemberment of the kingdom; and from the bearing of the Sicilians, it was evident that they had determined not to come to any understanding with the government. On these grounds, the King considered it his duty to protest against any act which should not be in accordance with the constitution he had granted. He had apparently forgotten that the Sicilians had refused that constitution, or perhaps, with his despotic view of government, he did not understand that a constitution, like any other contract, requires two parties to it. This protest was only laughed at by the Sicilians; it reached Palermo on the 24th of March, and on the following day, the parliament was solemnly opened. The large church of San Domenico was selected as the place where the ceremonies of the day should take place. Thirty-three years had elapsed since the last parliament had met; and the joy of the people may readily be imagined, when they heard the solemn peal of the bell of San Antonio, which announced to the city that the representatives of the nation had once more assembled. The president of the Provisional Government addressed the assembly, and rendered an account of the manner in which the General Committee had performed the difficult and arduous task which it had undertaken. He ended by declaring that the parliament of Sicily was now solemnly opened, and

then requested the two houses to adjourn to the halls which had been provided for their meetings, there to decide immediately upon the form of the executive. The multitude then retired, but remained till a late hour at night in the streets, participating in the festivities of the occasion. On the following day, the Parliament issued a decree that the executive power should be entrusted to a President of the government, and to six ministers to be named by the President. Ruggiero Settimo was unanimously elected President, and immediately formed a ministry, of which Michele Amari, the distinguished author of the *Guerra del Vespro Siciliano*,* was a member. The Parliament then entered upon its labors. On the 13th of April, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced to the Parliament, that the King of Naples having sent four plenipotentiaries to represent the *Two Sicilies* at the meeting of the Italian League which was to take place at Rome, he had come to propose that the Parliament should decree, that Ferdinand of Bourbon had, by this act, forfeited his right to the crown. This proposition was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and the following decree was voted.

“The Parliament declares :—

1. Ferdinand of Bourbon and his dynasty are for ever fallen from the throne of Sicily.
2. Sicily shall govern herself constitutionally, and call to the throne an Italian prince as soon as she shall have reformed her *statuto*.”

This decree was signed by the Marquis of Torrearsa, President of the Chamber of Commons, by the Duke of Serradefalco, President of the Chamber of Peers, and by Ruggiero Settimo, President of the Kingdom.

In conformity with this law, the second son of the late king of Sardinia was called to the vacant throne, on the 10th of July, under the name of Albert Amedeus I., King of Sicily. The crown was refused by this prince, and the King of Naples formally protested against the act by which the Parliament had declared the throne vacant, and offered it to the Sardinian prince; and he immediately ordered an expedition to be equipped against his Sicilian subjects. Consequently,

* See the *N. A. Review* for April, 1847.

on the 29th of August, a body of 14,000 troops were sent to reinforce the garrison of Messina, and the city was formally summoned to surrender. The authorities having refused, the place was bombarded, and after a few days, it was compelled to yield. This characteristic act of useless barbarity, which reduced the once flourishing and beautiful city of Messina almost to a heap of ruins, began the series of events which have marked the reëstablishment of Neapolitan rule in Sicily.

It is not our intention to give even a sketch of the bloody struggle by which Naples has once more gained possession of the island. Our purpose is already attained, if we have given our readers any more correct or definite impressions on the subject of this Sicilian revolt than they before possessed. That a revolution commenced under so favorable auspices, and which at first inspired us with lively hopes, that the time had at last arrived when justice was to be done to a nation which had been so long held in bondage, — that this revolution has ultimately proved unsuccessful, should surprise no one. The regeneration of Sicily depended on the regeneration of Italy; left to themselves, the islanders could do nothing. When Rome fell into the hands of such men as Mazzini and Garibaldi, and Charles Albert was defeated in his last heroic struggle with the Austrians, the hopes of Italy were crushed for the present century, perhaps forever. Surely, there never was a more favorable moment for that unhappy country to assume her former rank among the nations of the world than after the February Revolution in France. Austria was distracted by internal dissensions, and consequently lay open to every attack from without; England was unwilling, if not unable, to go to war; and France would unquestionably have sent an army to the rescue of the Italians, had they demanded such aid. And what have the Italians accomplished? Although the reply may seem harsh to some ears, we can but answer, nothing. They evinced great enthusiasm, sang patriotic songs, unfurled the Italian banner from one end of the peninsula to the other, took up arms for their defence, and gave proofs of courage and energy on a few occasions. But what has been the result? When the revolution commenced, Rome had a liberal sovereign who governed constitutionally; he was hurled from the throne, and has now returned to the

Vatican without having promised a single political guaranty to his people; the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom was governed by foreigners, and the foreigner still rules there. The Two Sicilies were subjected to the capricious sway of a Spanish Bourbon, and he still governs them. Two years have passed, during which the peninsula has been agitated and impoverished by war; her commerce has been stopped; foreign travel, which has been a source of large income to her, has been impeded; her rulers have been rendered more despotic by her unsuccessful efforts at shaking off their yoke; the courage of her people has come to be doubted, and less sympathy is felt for her. Her future attempts at regeneration will be distrusted after she has missed such an opportunity as that which has just been afforded, and the world will reproach her in the words of one of her own poets: —

Mesta Italia !
Qual momento hai tu perduto !
Quel momento, oh Dio, chi sa
Se mai piu ritornerà !
Gia sorgea ringiovanita
L'avillita tua virtù,
Come mai tornar potrai
Al languor di servitù.

Is it true, then, that Italy has so degenerated that no hope for her remains, — that she has fallen never more to rise? He must be a bold prophet who will dare to answer this question now. Yet, as long as there is a spark of life left in a nation whose past history can almost compensate for its present degradation, we shall not think that all chance is lost of seeing Italy once more prosperous and independent.